

ARGUMENTS/REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the present amendment is respectfully requested. Claims 1-19 are pending. Claim 1 is amended and claims 17-19 are added.

The objection to the drawings in item 1 of the office action is respectfully traversed. In particular, figure 1 of the present invention shows in phantom lines the central igniter unit 34 having central axis A that is moved further to the right. Therefore, figure 1 does show that the igniter housings which, viewed transversely to a longitudinal extent of said gas generator, are arranged asymmetrically to said outer housing, and the igniter housings which, viewed transversely to a longitudinal extent of said gas generator, are arranged asymmetrically to each other as claimed in claims 14 and 15. Thus, the objection to the drawings should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-10 and 14-16 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being unpatentable over Canterbury. Claims 11 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable in view of Canterbury in view of Kurokawa. Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination Canterbury and Faigle. Claim 1 is amended to recite that the igniter units are mounted laterally to the tubular side wall of the outer housing. Neither Canterbury nor any of the other prior art either alone or in combination

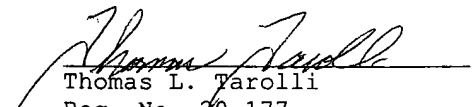
discloses or suggests igniter units that are mounted to a tubular side wall.

By contrast, Canterbury discloses an inflator 60 having generally cylindrical shaped stages. Each stage has an igniter assembly 44 arranged in an end wall of the stage (See Col. 6, lines 54-65). None of the igniters in Canterbury are arranged in a tubular side wall. Thus, claim 1 is allowable. Other amendments to claim 1 are for better grammatical form and do not further distinguish claim 1 from the prior art. Claims 2-16 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1 and are therefore allowable as depending from an allowable claim and for the specific features recited therein.

New claim 17 recites a gas generator comprising an elongated outer housing that has end faces and a side wall extending between the end faces. The gas generator further comprises at least three gas generating stages which can be activated independently of each other to generate gas. Each stage has a source of gas in the housing which source when activated produces gas. Each stage also has an associated igniter unit for activating an associated gas source. The igniter units are mounted on the side wall of the outer housing and spaced apart from the end faces and spaced apart from each other. None of the prior art discloses or suggests all of the claimed features of claim 17. Therefore, claim 17 is allowable. Claims 18-20 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 17 and are therefore allowable as depending from an allowable claim and for the specific features recited therein.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the amendment be entered and the application allowed. Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,


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